

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Art During World War I: Flour Sacks and Herbert Hoover

- Standard: I. Culture
III. People, Places and Environments
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VII. Power, Authority, and Governance
VII. Productions, Distribution, and Consumption
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices
- Grade Level: 9–12
- Objectives: The student will:
- Correlate art with humanitarian actions
 - Understand the role of Herbert Hoover in World War I
- Time: 1–2 class periods (Different aspects of this activity may be assigned as homework)
- Materials: Documents: **1914** *Food for Starving Belgians*
1915 *The Starvation of Millions*
1917 *An Appeal from the King*
- Resources: *Images of Belgium in WWI*
Images of Flour Sacks
- Access to the Internet:
- History of the Flour Sacks
- <http://hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/collections/flour%20sacks/index.html>
- Herbert Hoover and Belgian Relief in World War I
- <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1989/spring/hoover-belgium.html>
- Exercises: *Flour Sack Template*
Flour Sack Evaluation Form
- Materials: Colored Pencils, Crayons, Markers, Paints
- Procedures:
1. Provide students with the documents, *Food for Starving Belgians*, *The Starvation of Millions*, and *An Appeal from the King*.
 2. Discuss these questions as guidance.
 - a. Why is Belgium in such dire straits during WWI?
 - b. What role has the U.S. adopted in the affairs of Belgium?
 - c. What is the task for Herbert Hoover?

- d.** How is negotiation with Germany maintained during the war?
- e.** Describe the appeal by King Albert of Belgium. What is his assessment of Herbert Hoover?

3. The American Commission for Relief under the leadership of Herbert Hoover went to great lengths to bring food from the United States to Belgium and, later, to other countries as well. This was a huge logistical achievement—on the home front of the United States as well as the

For additional information, see:

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1989/spring/hover-belgium.html>.

In this article George H. Nash provides a thorough look at Hoover and the intricacies of his work in Belgium—excellent in-depth information to share with students via lecture or reading.

4. Provide students with the reading, *History of the Flour Sacks* (print from website.) This story provides a tangible example of humanitarian aid and its outreach.

5. Discuss:

- a.** The careful control of the bags after delivery
- b.** The “recycling” of the flour bags by Belgians
- c.** Designs of bags
- d.** Destinations of designed bags

6. Project the resource, *Images of Belgium in the First World War*, and *Images of the Flour Sacks*. Review the images with students.

7. Distribute copies of the *Flour Sack Template*.

8. Students may work independently, in pairs, or in groups.

9. Provide markers, colored pencils, crayons, or paints.

10. Explain that they are to create a flour sack as would have been done during World War I.

11. They may refer to the *Images of Flour Sacks* to determine an approach to the task.

12. Allow adequate time for students to create their flour sacks.

13. Display the images around the room (after numbering each one.)

14. Provide students with the *Flour Sack Evaluation Form*.

15. Have students walk around the gallery, viewing, and evaluating each flour sack.

16. Discuss the evaluations.

17. Allow art work to remain on display. ■